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PRIORITY

SENT DEPARTMENT 1160, REPEATED INFORMATION PRIORITY BERLIN 326,  
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IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE SOVIET NOTE SEEMS CLEAR. THE FOUR POWER AGREEMENTS ON BERLIN HAVE BEEN DENOUNCED AND SOVIET ACTION WILL FOLLOW IN 6 MONTHS OR LESS, AS SPECIFIED IN THE NOTE. SINCE THE WEST IS UNANIMOUS IN REJECTING A "FREE DEMILITARIZED CITY OF BERLIN", THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO OUR TAKING THE POSITION THAT WE WILL MAINTAIN OUR GARRISONS IN BERLIN. WE CANNOT LONG MAINTAIN GARRISONS AS SOVIET NOTE SUGGESTS BY DEALING WITH GDR. THEREFORE, WE MUST MAKE CLEAR (A) WE WILL NOT DEAL WITH GDR, (B) WE WILL MAINTAIN OUR GARRISONS, (C) OUR READINESS TO USE FORCE AGAINST ANY INTERFERENCE OUR ACCESS TO BERLIN IF WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THE GDR, OUR SURFACE ACCESS ROUTES WILL PROBABLY BE DENIED TO US. WHETHER WE CAN MAINTAIN OUR AIR ACCESS WILL DEPEND ON (A) THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SOVIETS AND THE GDR ARE PREPARED TO INTERFERE WITH OUR PLANES, AND (B) THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE ARE PREPARED TO RESORT TO FORCE IN ORDER TO OVERCOME SUCH INTERFERENCE. THESE ARE THE IMMEDIATE PRACTICAL POLITICO-MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE SOVIET NOTE. HOWEVER, THE NOTE HAS BROADER IMPLICATIONS THAN THOSE RELATING TO BERLIN, AND THESE CONCERN THE FUTURE OF

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-2- 1160, DECEMBER 2, 7 PM, FROM BONN

GERMANY AND OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE ITSELF. THE NOTE IS A MOVE, COUCHED IN DIPLOMATIC FORM, BUT IN REALITY DIRECTED TO, AND OPERATING ON, PUBLIC OPINION IN GERMANY AND THE WEST IN GENERAL. BY THE ACT OF ITS PUBLICATION, THE NOTE UNLEASHES POWERFUL PRESSURES ON GERMAN OPINION IN THE DIRECTION OF REACHING SOME KIND OF ACCOMMODATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION THROUGH NEGOTIATION.

IN THE LAST YEAR, THE IDEA OF DISENGAGEMENT HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY BROUGHT TO THE FORE BY THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE RAPACKI PLAN, BY THE PUBLIC UTTERANCES OF SUPPORTERS OF THIS GENERAL CONCEPT, E.G.: GEORGE KENNAN. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN NO WAVERING IN THE OFFICIAL WESTERN REACTION, THE GROUND BENEATH THE PRINCIPAL MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE IS VARYING DEGREES OF HARDNESS. IN THE CASE OF THE BRITISH IT MAY BE SAID TO BE DEFINITELY SOFT. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NOTE IS THAT IT GREATLY ENCOURAGES THOSE ELEMENTS IN GERMANY AND IN THE REST OF THE WEST WHO ARE IN FAVOR OF REACHING SOME KIND OF ACCOMMODATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE, WHICH WILL IN THEIR VIEW, APPEASE THE SOVIETS.

THE SIX MONTHS DEADLINE IS PERHAPS LESS IMPORTANT IN RELATION TO THE BERLIN QUESTION, THAN IN ITS EFFECT ON WESTERN OPINION AND ATTITUDES. IT MIGHT BE CALLED, FROM THE SOVIET VIEWPOINT, A PERIOD OF "INCUBATION" DURING WHICH PRESSURES WILL BE GENERATED WHICH MAY COMPEL THE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE SOVIET UNION ON A BASIS WHICH WILL PLACE THEM AT A DISADVANTAGE.

THEREFORE IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE TASK AT THE DECEMBER 15 FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING SHOULD BE (1) TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A COMMON INTERPRETATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SOVIET UNION AS REVEALED BY THEIR NOTE; (2) TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH REGARD TO BERLIN (THE GERMANS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO COME UP WITH IDEAS); (3) TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE SUBSTANCE AND TIMING OF A REPLY TO THE SOVIET NOTE.

IF WE INTEND TO MAINTAIN OUR GARRISONS IN BERLIN BEYOND THE EXPIRATION OF THE SOVIET DEADLINE, THE SOVIETS SHOULD BE PUT ON NOTICE OF SUCH DETERMINATION AND WE SHOULD SAY NOTHING WHICH MIGHT LEAD THEM TO INFER THAT WE WOULD NOT USE FORCE TO MAINTAIN OUR LAND AND AIR ACCESS.

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